

Background

Q: What is MCCs Research?

A: MCCs Research is the study of Multiple Chronic Conditions (having 2 or more concurrent chronic conditions).

Q: Why is MCCs Research important?

A: There is increasing recognition that the most common “chronic condition” in older adults is multiple chronic conditions (MCCs). Yet, due to the dominance of a disease-specific approach to clinical research, there is a dearth of strong research evidence to guide clinical practice and inform shared clinical decision-making relevant to the care of patients with MCCs.

Q: What is the AGING Initiative’s MCCs Scholars Program?

A: The MCCs Scholars Program aims to foster a nationwide community and mentoring network to extend and sustain MCCs research. The AGING Initiative will select up to 14 scholars this year. The scholarships will provide travel and accommodations for an overnight training workshop to be held April 24-26, 2024 in the Washington DC area preceding the Annual Meeting of the OAICs. Over the subsequent year, scholars will participate in webinar-based career development teleconferences offering activities such as specific aims reviews and structured peer mentoring. Scholars will also participate in a formal mentoring program, which will pair scholars with senior scientific mentors and members of the [AGING Initiative Patient/Caregiver Advisory Council \(APCAC\)](#) based on shared research interests.

Q: What is the AGING Initiative (the HCSRN-OAICs AGING Initiative)?

A: The AGING Initiative is the Health Care Systems Research Network (HCSRN) - Older American Independence Centers (OAICs) Advancing Geriatrics Infrastructure and Network Growth (AGING) Initiative. The AGING Initiative is funded by the National Institute on Aging and aims to develop an interdisciplinary research agenda focused on older adults with MCCs. The AGING Initiative is led by Principal Investigator (PI) Jerry Gurwitz, and Co-PIs Jay Magaziner and Alyce Adams. The MCCs Scholars Program is led by Heather Whitson and Leah Hanson.

Program Details

Q: What will I learn as an MCCs Scholar?

A: Over the subsequent year, scholars will participate in six webinar-based career development teleconferences based on 4 curricular elements:

1. Significance of Multiple Chronic Conditions
2. Resources and tools for MCCs researchers
3. Enabling meaningful patient/caregiver engagement
4. Professional/leadership development for investigators

Q: What are some of the benefits to being an MCCs Scholar?

A: As an MCCs Scholar, you will gain experience in grant reviewing, peer collaboration, senior mentorship, networking opportunities, interaction with NIA representatives, and exposure to two national strongholds of AGING research.

Application Process

Q: Who should apply to the MCCs Scholars Program?

A: Scholars must meet the following criteria:

- MD, PhD, or equivalent degree (e.g. DO, AudD, DPT, etc.)

- Evidence of commitment to research in a field relevant to MCCs and/or aging
- Pre-tenure. Preference given to applicants who have not yet attained independent (i.e., R01 level) funding
- Must attend the workshop in April 24-26, 2024 and 6 webinars during the Scholarship year (may attend additional webinars in future years, if desired)
- Must commit to regular/monthly meetings with assigned mentor(s)

Q: How do I apply to be an MCCs Scholar?

A: The online application for the program can be found here: <https://bit.ly/47opKgm>

Q: What will be on the application?

A: In addition to institutional and demographic information, you will be asked to upload a NIH-style biosketch and provide short responses (400 words or less) to describe:

- Your interests and aspirations related to MCCs research
- Prior accomplishments and/or evidence of potential to lead or participate in collaborative research
- Potential impact or relevance that your research might have on individuals living with MCCs
- Your goals for participating in the MCCs Scholars Program

Q: Is all geriatrics/aging/dementia research appropriate for MCCs scholars?

A: No. While MCCs are common at older ages, geriatric research in dementia, delirium, falls, or other geriatric conditions is only consider MCCs if there is a specific focus on how MCCs are related to these conditions.

Q: What is the review process for selecting candidates?

A: Each candidate will be assigned to 2 scientific reviewers and 2 patient/caregiver advisor reviewers. Reviewers will score each section of the application on a scale of 1 (unsatisfactory) to 5 (outstanding) based on the response given, in addition to a rating of the entire application. The 5 sections of the applications that will be rated are:

1. Biosketch
2. Interest and aspirations related to MCCs research
3. Evidence of collaborative potential
4. Impact on patients living with MCCs
5. Goals for participating in MCCs Scholars Program

Q: What are the criteria that will be used to select applicants?

A: The selection of applicants will be based on evidence of commitment to and productivity in research relevant to MCCs (appropriate to stage of career), as well as meeting our goal to create a balanced cadre of 14 investigators with complementary expertise and perspectives.

Q: Does my research have to be about older adults/aging to be considered?

A: It does not. While older adults are the largest population with MCCs, the goal of this cohort is to promote the study of MCCs in its entirety.

Q: I will be receiving my PhD a few months after application due date. Can I still apply?

A: Unfortunately, the degree requirements must be met before the application is due.

Q: Can international researchers apply to the program?

A: Yes! Any international applicant may apply. Any further inquiries about the process of an international applicant can be made to Ollie.Desrochers@umassmed.edu.

Q: If I have previously applied for the MCCs Scholars Program and was not accepted, will that count against me?

A: It definitely does not count against you! We received many more meritorious applicants in previous years than we had positions to offer. We hope to receive repeat applicants and many funded scholars have been accepted on a repeat application.

Timeline

Q: When will applications be due?

A: Applications Due: January 8, 2024

Q: When is the informational webinar?

A: We will be hosting an informational webinar about the Scholars Program on November 20, 2023, which you can register for in advance by using the following link: <https://bit.ly/3EmyTsK>

Q: When will Scholars be notified if they have been accepted?

A: Scholars will be notified by February 5, 2024

Q: When will the Scholars Workshop be?

A: The Workshop will be held April 24-26, 2024. Activities will begin Wednesday, April 24 and will be open to MCCs Scholars only, with select activities on Thursday and Friday open to other junior investigators attending the Pepper Center Annual meeting.

Q: If I am selected as a Scholar, what are my commitments over the next year in the MCCs Scholars Program?

A: Scholars are expected to participate in the in person Workshop, attend six webinars, and participate in monthly meetings with senior and peer mentors. After the Workshop, we expect participation in this program involves an average of 2-3 hours per month.

Additional Information

Q: Where can I learn more about the MCCs Scholars Program?

A: Learn more about the MCCs Scholars Program and find additional resources at the AGING Initiative website: <https://theaginginitiative.wordpress.com/mccs-scholars/>

Q: Who should I contact if I am interested?

A: Any inquires can be made directly to Ollie Desrochers at Ollie.Desrochers@umassmed.edu.